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# *Morning*

James Whitcomb Riley





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# MORNING

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

From the Portrait by John S. Sargent  
In the John Herron Art Institute, Indianapolis

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# MORNING







**TO  
MEREDITH NICHOLSON**







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**MORNING**







## MORNING

BREATH of Morning—breath of May—  
With your zest of yesterday  
'And crisp, balmy freshness, smite  
Our old hearts with Youth's delight.

Tilt the cap of Boyhood—yea,  
Where no "forelock" waves, to-day,—  
Back, in breezy, cool excess,  
Stroke it with the old caress.

Let us see as we have seen—  
Where all paths are dewy-green,  
And all human-kind are kin—  
Let us be as we have been!



## SIS RAPALYE

WHEN rainy-greener shoots the grass  
And blooms the cherry-tree,  
And children laugh by glittering brooks,  
Wild with the ecstasy  
Of bursting Spring, with twittering bird  
And hum of honey-bee,—  
“Sis Rapalye!” my spirit shouts . . .  
And she is here with me!

’As laugh the children, so her laugh  
Haunts all the atmosphere;—  
Her song is in the brook’s refrain;  
Her glad eyes, flashing clear,  
Are in the morning dews; her speech  
Is melody so dear,  
The bluebird trills,—“Sis Rapalye!—  
I hear!—I hear!—I hear!”

Again in races, at “Recess,”  
I see her braided hair  
Toss past me as I stay to lift  
Her straw hat, fallen there;



### SIS RAPALYE

The school-bell sends a vibrant pang  
My heart can hardly bear.—  
Yet still she leads—Sis Rapalye—  
And leads me everywhere!

Now I am old.—Yet she remains  
The selfsame child of ten.—  
Gay, gallant little girl, to race  
On into Heaven then!  
Yet gallant, gay Sis Rapalye—  
In blossom-time, and when  
The trees and grasses beckon her—  
Comes back to us again.

And so, however long since youth  
Whose raptures wild and free  
An old man's heart may claim no more,—  
With more than memory  
I share the Spring's own joy that brings  
My boyhood back to me  
With laughter, blossoms, singing birds  
And sweet Sis Rapalye.



## THE LOVELINESS

Ах, what a long and loitering way  
And ever-lovely way, in truth,  
We travel on from day to day  
Out of the realms of youth!

How eagerly we onward press  
The lovely path that lures us still  
With ever-changing loveliness  
Of grassy vale and hill:

Of groves of May and morning-lands  
Dew-diamonded and gemmed with bloom;  
With amber streams and golden sands  
And aisles of gleam and gloom;

Where lovely little Fairy-folk,  
In careless ambush, pipe and call  
From tousled ferns neath elm and oak  
By shoal and waterfall:



## THE LOVELINESS

Transparent even as the stream,  
The gnarlèd prison-tree reveals  
Its lovely Dryad in a dream  
That scarce itself conceals ;

The sudden redbird trips the sight  
And tricks the ear—or doubtless we  
With happy palms had clapped the Sprite  
In new captivity.

On—on, through all the gathering years,  
Still gleams the loveliness, though seen  
Through dusks of loss and mists of tears  
That vainly intervene.

Time stints us not of lovely things—  
Old Age hath still a treasure-store,—  
The loveliness of songs and wings  
And voices on before.—

And—loveliness beyond all grace  
Of lovely words to say or sing,—  
The loveliness of Hope's fair face  
Forever brightening.



## THE QUEST OF THE FATHERS

WHAT were our Forefathers trying to find  
When they weighed anchor, that desperate hour  
They turned from home, and the warning wind  
Sighed in the sails of the old Mayflower?  
What sought they that could compensate  
Their hearts for the loved ones left behind—  
The household group at the glowing grate?—  
What were our Forefathers trying to find?

What were they trying to find more dear  
Than their native land and its annals old,—  
Its throne—its church—and its worldly cheer—  
Its princely state, and its hoarded gold?  
What more dear than the mounds of green  
There o'er the brave sires, slumbering long?  
What more fair than the rural scene—  
What more sweet than the throstle's song?

Faces pallid, but sternly set,  
Lips locked close, as in voiceless prayer,  
And eyes with never a teardrop wet—  
Even the tenderest woman's there!



## THE QUEST OF THE FATHERS

But O the light from the soul within,  
As each spake each with a flashing mind—  
As the lightning speaks to its kith and kin!  
What were our Forefathers trying to find?

Argonauts of a godless day—  
Seers of visions, and dreamers vain!  
Their ship's foot set in a pathless way,—  
The fogs, the mists, and the blinding rain!—  
When the gleam of sun, and moon and star  
Seemed lost so long they were half forgot—  
When the fixed eyes found nor near nor far,  
And the night whelmed all, and the world was  
not.

And yet, befriended in some strange wise,  
They groped their way in the storm and stress  
Through which—though their look found not the  
skies—  
The Lord's look found *them* ne'ertheless—  
Found them, yea, in their piteous lot,  
As they in their faith from the first divined—  
Found them, and favored them—too. But what—  
What were our Forefathers trying to find?



## THE QUEST OF THE FATHERS

Numb and agasp, with the frost for breath,  
They came on a frozen shore, at last,  
As bleak and drear as the coasts of death,—  
And yet their psalm o'er the wintry blast  
Rang glad as though 'twere the chiming mirth  
Of jubilant children landing there—  
Until o'er all of the icy earth  
The snows seemed warm, as they knelt in  
prayer.

For, lo! they were close on the trail they  
sought:—

In the sacred soil of the rights of men  
They marked where the Master-hand had  
wrought;

And there they garnered and sowed again.—  
*Their* land—then *ours*, as to-day it is,  
With its flag of heaven's own light designed,  
And God's vast love o'er all. . . . And *this*  
Is what our Forefathers were trying to find.



## THE GREAT GOD PAN

*"What was he doing, the great god Pan?"*

*—Mrs. Browning.*

O PAN is the goodliest god, I wist,  
Of all of the lovable gods that be!—  
For his two strong hands were the first to twist  
From the depths of the current, through spatter  
and mist,  
The long-hushed reeds that he pressed in glee  
To his murmurous mouth, as he chuckled and  
kissed  
Their souls into melody.

And the wanton winds are in love with Pan:  
They loll in the shade with him day by day;  
And betimes as beast, and betimes as man,  
They love him as only the wild winds can,—  
Or sleeking the coat of his limbs one way,  
Or brushing his brow with the locks they fan  
To the airs he loves to play.



## THE GREAT GOD PAN

And he leans by the river, in gloom and gleam,  
Blowing his reeds as the breezes blow—  
His cheeks puffed out, and his eyes in a dream,  
And his hoof-tips, over the leaves in the stream,  
Tapping the time of the tunes that flow  
As sweet as the drowning echoes seem  
To his rollicking wraith below.



ON READING DR. HENRY VAN DYKE'S  
VOLUME OF POEMS—MUSIC

Music!—Yea, and the airs you play—  
Out of the faintest Far-Away  
And the sweetest, too; and the dearest Here,  
With its quavering voice but its bravest cheer—  
The prayer that aches to be all expressed—  
The kiss of love at its tenderest :  
Music—music, with glad heart-throbs  
Within it; and music with tears and sobs  
Shaking it, as the startled soul  
Is shaken at shriek of the fife and roll  
Of the drums ;—then as suddenly lulled again  
With the whisper and lisp of the summer rain :  
Mist of melodies fragrance-fine—  
The birdsong flicked from the eglantine  
With the dews when the springing bramble  
          throws  
A rarer drench on its ripest rose,  
And the wingèd song soars up and sinks  
To the dove's dim coo by the river-brinks



ON READING DR. VAN DYKE'S POEMS

Where the ripple's voice still laughs along  
Its glittering path of light and song.  
Music, O Poet, and all your own  
By right of capture and that alone,—  
For in it we hear the harmony  
Born of the earth and the air and the sea,  
And over and under it, and all through,  
We catch the chime of The Anthem, too.



## LONGFELLOW

1807—FEBRUARY 27—1907

O GENTLEST kinsman of Humanity!

Thy love hath touched all hearts, even as thy Song  
Hath touched all chords of music that belong  
To the quavering heaven-strung harp of harmony:

Thou hast made man to feel and hear and see  
Divinely ;—made the weak to be the strong ;  
By thy melodious magic, changed the wrong  
To changeless right—and joyed and wept as we.  
Worlds listen, lulled and solaced at the spell  
That folds and holds us—soul and body, too,—  
As though thy songs, as loving arms in stress  
Of sympathy and trust ineffable,  
Were thrown about us thus by one who knew  
Our common human need of kindness.



## LAUGHING SONG

SING us something full of laughter ;  
Tune your harp, and twang the strings  
Till your glad voice, chirping after,  
Mates the song the robin sings :  
Loose your lips and let them flutter  
Like the wings of wanton birds,—  
Though they naught but laughter utter,  
Laugh, and we'll not miss the words.

Sing in ringing tones that mingle  
In a melody that flings  
Joyous echoes in a jingle  
Sweeter than the minstrel sings :  
Sing of Winter, Spring or Summer,  
Clang of war, or low of herds ;  
Trill of cricket, roll of drummer—  
Laugh, and we'll not miss the words.



### LAUGHING SONG

Like the lisping laughter glancing  
From the meadow brooks and springs,  
Or the river's ripples dancing  
To the tune the current sings—  
Sing of Now, and the Hereafter;  
Let your glad song, like the birds',  
Overflow with limpid laughter—  
Laugh, and we'll not miss the words.



## A GOLDEN WEDDING

[DECEMBER—1884]

YOUR Golden Wedding!—fifty years  
Of comradeship, through smiles and tears!—  
Through summer sun, and winter sleet,  
You walked the ways with willing feet;  
For, journeying together thus,  
Each path held something glorious.  
No winter wind could blow so chill  
But found you even warmer still  
In fervor of affection—blest  
In knowing all was for the best;  
And so, content, you faced the storm  
And fared on, smiling, arm-in-arm.

But why this moralizing strain  
Beside a hearth that glows again  
As on your *Wooden* wedding day?—  
When butter-prints and paddles lay



## A GOLDEN WEDDING

Around in dough-bowls, tubs and churns,  
And all such "woodenish" concerns;  
And "woodenish" they are—for now  
Who can afford to keep a cow  
And pestle some old churn, when you  
Can buy good butter—"golden", too—  
Far cheaper than you can afford  
To make it and neglect the Lord!

And round your hearth the faces gleam  
That may recall, as in a dream,  
The brightness of a time when *Tin*  
Came glittering and clanging in  
And raising noise enough to seize  
And settle any swarm of bees!  
But those were darling times, no doubt,—  
To see the mother pouring out  
The "tins" of milk, and tilting up  
The coffee-pot above each cup;  
Or, with the ladle from the wall,  
Dipping and serving mush for all.

And *all* the "weddings", as they came,—  
The "*Glass*", the "*China*",—still the same



## A GOLDEN WEDDING

You see them, till the last ere this,—  
The "*Silver*",—and your wedded bliss  
Abated not!—for love appears  
Just silvered over with the years:—  
Silver the grandchild's laugh you hear—  
Silver his hopes, and silver-clear  
Your every prayer for him,—and still  
Silver your hope, through good and ill—  
Silver and silver everywhere,  
Bright as the silver of your hair!

But on your *Golden* Wedding!—Nay—  
What can I give to you to-day  
Who am too very poor indeed  
To offer what I so much need?  
If gold I gave, I fear, alack!  
I'd needs provide you gave it back,  
To stay me, the long years before  
I'd stacked and heaped five dollars more!  
And so, in lieu—and little worse—  
I proffer you this dross of verse—  
The merest tinsel, I admit,—  
But take it—I have more of it.



## A PARTING GUEST

WHAT delightful hosts are they—  
Life and Love!  
Lingeringly I turn away,  
This late hour, yet glad enough  
They have not withheld from me  
Their high hospitality.  
So, with face lit with delight  
And all gratitude, I stay  
Yet to press their hands and say,  
"Thanks.—So fine a time! Good night."



## THE OLD DAYS

THE old days—the far days—  
The ever dear and fair!—  
The old days—the lost days—  
How lovely they were!  
The old days of Morning,  
With the dew-drench on the flowers  
And apple-buds and blossoms  
Of those old days of ours.

Then was the *real* gold  
Spendthrift Summer flung;  
Then was the *real* song  
Bird or Poet sung!  
There was never censure then,—  
Only honest praise—  
And all things were worthy of it  
In the old days.



## THE OLD DAYS

There bide the true friends—  
The first and the best;  
There clings the green grass  
Close where they rest:  
Would they were here? No;—  
Would we were there! . . .  
The old days—the lost days—  
How lovely they were!



## EVEN AS A CHILD

CANTON, SEPTEMBER 19, 1901

EVEN as a child to whom sad neighbors speak  
In symbol, saying that his father "sleeps"—  
Who feels their meaning, even as his cheek  
Feels the first teardrop as it stings and leaps—  
Who keenly knows his loss, and yet denies  
Its awful import—grieves unreconciled,  
Moans, drowns—rouses, with new-drowning  
eyes—

Even as a child.

Even as a child; with empty, aimless hand  
Clasped sudden to the heart all hope deserts—  
With tears that blur all lights on sea or land—  
The lip that quivers and the throat that hurts:  
Even so, the Nation that has known his love  
Is orphaned now; and, whelmed in anguish  
wild,  
Knows but its sorrow and the ache thereof,  
Even as a child.



## THE SOLDIER

THE DEDICATION OF THE SOLDIERS AND SAILORS  
MONUMENT, INDIANAPOLIS, MAY 15, 1902

THE SOLDIER!—meek the title, yet divine:

Therefore, with reverence, as with wild acclaim,  
We fain would honor in exalted line

The glorious lineage of the glorious name:  
The Soldier.—Lo, he ever was, and is,  
Our Country's high custodian, by right  
Of patriot blood that brims that heart of his  
With fiercest love, yet honor infinite.

The Soldier—within whose inviolate care

The Nation takes repose,—her inmost fane  
Of Freedom ever has its guardian there,

As have her forts and fleets on land and main:  
The Heavenward Banner, as its ripples stream  
In happy winds, or float in languid flow,  
Through silken meshes ever sifts the gleam  
Of sunshine on its Sentinel below.



## THE SOLDIER

The Soldier!—Why, the very utterance  
Is music—as of rallying bugles, blent  
With blur of drums and cymbals and the chants  
Of battle-hymns that shake the continent!—  
The thunder-chorus of a world is stirred  
To awful, universal jubilee,—  
Yet ever through it, pure and sweet, are heard  
The prayers of Womanhood, and Infancy.

Even as a fateful tempest sudden loosed  
Upon our senses, so our thoughts are blown  
Back where The Soldier battled, nor refused  
A grave all nameless in a clime unknown.—  
The Soldier—though, perchance, worn, old and  
gray ;

The Soldier—though, perchance, the merest  
lad,—  
The Soldier—though he gave his life away,  
Hearing the shout of “Victory,” was glad ;

Aye, glad and grateful, that in such a cause  
His veins were drained at Freedom’s holy  
shrine—

Rechristening the land—as first it was,—  
His blood poured thus in sacramental sign



## THE SOLDIER

Of new baptism of the hallowed name  
"My Country"—now on every lip once more  
And blest of God with still enduring fame.—  
This thought even then The Soldier gloried  
o'er—

The dying eyes upraised in rapture there,—  
As, haply, he remembered how a breeze  
Once swept his boyish brow and tossed his hair,  
Under the fresh bloom of the orchard-trees—  
When his heart hurried, in some wistful haste  
Of ecstasy, and his quick breath was wild  
And balmy-sharp and chilly-sweet to taste,—  
And he towered godlike, though a trembling  
child!

Again, through luminous mists, he saw the skies'  
Far fields white-tented ; and in gray and blue  
And dazzling gold, he saw vast armies rise  
And fuse in fire—from which, in swiftest view,  
The Old Flag soared, and friend and foe as one  
Blent in an instant's vivid mirage . . . Then  
The eyes closed smiling on the smiling sun  
That changed the seer to a child again.—



## THE SOLDIER

And, even so, The Soldier slept.—Our own!—  
The Soldier of our plaudits, flowers and  
tears,—

O this memorial of bronze and stone—  
His love shall outlast *this* a thousand years!  
Yet, as the towering symbol bids us do,—  
With soul saluting, as salutes the hand,  
We answer as The Soldier answered to  
The Captain's high command.



## HIS HEART OF CONSTANT YOUTH

*"And I never hear the drums beat  
that I do not think of him."  
—Major Charles L. Holstein.*

TURN through his life, each word and deed  
Now sacred as it is—  
How helped and soothed we are to read  
A history like his!

To turn the years, in far review,  
And find him—as To-day—  
In orchard-lands of bloom and dew  
Again a boy at play:

The jeweled grass—the sumptuous trees  
And flower and fragrance there,  
With song of birds and drone of bees  
And Springtime everywhere:



### HIS HEART OF CONSTANT YOUTH

Turn any chapter that we will,  
Read any page, in sooth,  
We find his glad heart owning still  
The freshness of his youth.

With such a heart of tender care  
He loved his own, and thus  
His home was, to the loved ones there,  
A temple glorious.

And, ever youthful, still his love  
Enshrined, all manifold,  
The people—all the poor thereof,  
The helpless and the old.

And little children—Ah! to them  
His love was as the sun  
Wrought in a magic diadem  
That crowned them, everyone.

And ever young his reverence for  
The laws: like morning-dew  
He shone as counsel, orator,  
And clear logician, too.



## HIS HEART OF CONSTANT YOUTH

And, as a boy, his gallant soul  
    Made answer to the trill  
Of battle-trumpet and the roll  
    Of drums that echo still :

His comrades—as his country, dear—  
    They knew, and ever knew  
That buoyant, boyish love, sincere  
    As truth itself is true :

He marched with them, in tireless tramp—  
    Laughed, cheered and lifted up  
The battle-chorus, and in camp  
    Shared blanket, pipe and cup.

His comrades ! . . . When you meet again,  
    In anguish though you bow,  
Remember how he loved you then,  
    And how he loves you *now*.



## THE DOCTOR

[APRIL 29, 1907]

*"He took the suffering human race,  
He read each wound, each weakness clear;  
And struck his finger on the place,  
And said: 'Thou ailest here, and here!'"*  
—Matthew Arnold.

WE may idealize the chief of men—  
Idealize the humblest citizen,—  
Idealize the ruler in his chair—  
The poor man, or the poorer millionaire;  
Idealize the soldier—sailor—or  
The simple man of peace—at war with war;—  
The hero of the sword or fife-and-drum. . . .  
Why not idealize the Doctor some?

The Doctor is, by principle, we know,  
Opposed to sentiment: he veils all show  
Of feeling, and is proudest when he hides  
The sympathy which natively abides



## THE DOCTOR

Within the stoic precincts of a soul  
Which owns strict duty as its first control,  
And so must guard the ill, lest worse may  
come. . . .

Why not idealize the Doctor some?

He is the master of emotions—he  
Is likewise certain of that mastery,—  
Or dare he face contagion in its ire,  
Or scathing fever in its leaping fire?  
He needs must smile upon the ghastly face  
That yearns up toward him in that warded place  
Where even the Saint-like Sisters' lips grow  
dumb.

Why not idealize the Doctor some?

He wisely hides his heart from you and me—  
He hath grown tearless, of necessity,—  
He knows the sight is clearer, being blind;  
He knows the cruel knife is very kind;  
Ofttimes, he must be pitiless, for thought  
Of the remembered wife or child he sought  
To save through kindness that was overcome.  
Why not idealize the Doctor some?



## THE DOCTOR

Bear with him, trustful, in his darkest doubt  
Of how the mystery of death comes out ;  
He knows—he knows,—aye, better yet than we,  
That out of Time must dawn Eternity ;  
He knows his own compassion—what *he* would  
Give in relief of all ills, if he could.—  
We wait alike one Master : He will come.  
Do we idealize the Doctor some ?



## **"OUT OF REACH"?**

**You think them "out of reach," your dead?**

**Nay, by my own dead, I deny**

**Your "out of reach."—Be comforted:**

**'Tis not so far to die.**

**O by their dear remembered smiles**

**And outheld hands and welcoming speech,**

**They wait for us, thousands of miles**

**This side of "out-of-reach."**



## MY FOE

MY FOE? You name yourself, then,—I refuse

A term so dark to designate you by.

To me you are most kind and true; and I  
Am grateful as the dust is for the dews  
That brim the dusk, and falter, drip and ooze  
From the dear darkness of the summer sky.

Vex not yourself for lack of moan or cry  
Of mine. Not any harm, nor ache nor bruise  
Could reach my soul through any stroke you fain  
Might launch upon me,—it were as the lance  
Even of the lightning did it leap to rend  
A ray of sunshine—'twould recoil again.  
So, blessing you, with pitying countenance,  
I wave a hand to you, my helpless friend.



## THE RAINY MORNING

THE DAWN of the day was dreary,  
And the lowering clouds o'erhead  
Wept in a silent sorrow  
Where the sweet sunshine lay dead;  
And a wind came out of the eastward  
Like an endless sigh of pain,  
And the leaves fell down in the pathway  
And writhed in the falling rain.

I had tried in a brave endeavor  
To chord my harp with the sun,  
But the strings would slacken ever,  
And the task was a weary one:  
And so, like a child impatient  
And sick of a discontent,  
I bowed in a shower of teardrops  
And mourned with the instrument.



### THE RAINY MORNING

And lo! as I bowed, the splendor  
Of the sun bent over me,  
With a touch as warm and tender  
As a father's hand might be :  
'And, even as I felt its presence,  
My clouded soul grew bright,  
And the tears, like the rain of morning,  
Melted in mists of light.



TO EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

THE AUTHORS CLUB RECEPTION, NEW YORK,  
DECEMBER 6, 1900

It is a various tribute you command,  
    O Poet-seer and World-sage in one!—  
The scholar greets you; and the student; and  
    The stoic—and his visionary son:  
The painter, harvesting with quiet eye  
    Your features; and the sculptor, dreaming, too,  
A classic marble figure, lifted high  
    Where Fame's immortal ones are waiting you.

The man of letters, with his wistful face;  
    The grizzled scientist; the young A. B.;  
The true historian, of force and grace;  
    The orator, of pure simplicity;  
The journalist—the editor, likewise;  
    The young war-correspondent; and the old  
War-seasoned general, with sagging eyes,  
    And nerve and hand of steel, and heart of gold.



TO EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

The serious humorist ; the blithe divine ;  
The lawyer, with that twinkling look he wears ;  
The bleak-faced man in the dramatic line ;  
The social lion—and the bulls and bears ;  
These—these, and more, O favored guest of all,  
Have known your benefactions, and are led  
To pay their worldly homage, and to call  
Down Heaven's blessings on your honored  
head.

Ideal, to the utmost plea of art—  
As real, to labor's most exacting need,—  
Your dual services of soul and heart  
Enrich the world alike in dream and deed :  
For you have brought to us, from out the mine  
Delved but by genius in scholastic soil,  
The blended treasures of a wealth divine,—  
Your peerless gift of song—your life of toil.



## THE COUNTRY EDITOR

A THOUGHTFUL brow and face—of sallow hue,  
But warm with welcome, as we find him there,  
Throned in his old misnomered “easy chair,”  
Scrawling a “leader,” or a book-review ;  
Or staring through the roof for something new  
With which to lift a wretched rival’s hair,  
Or blow some petty clique in empty air  
And snap the party-ligaments in two.  
A man he is deserving well of thee,—  
So be compassionate—yea, pay thy dues,  
Nor pamper him with thy spring-poetry,  
But haul him wood, or something he can use ;  
And promptly act, nor tarry long when he  
Gnaweth his pen and glareth rabidly.



## AN EMPTY NEST

I FIND an old deserted nest,  
Half-hidden in the underbrush:  
A withered leaf, in phantom jest,  
Has nestled in it like a thrush  
With weary, palpitating breast.

I muse as one in sad surprise  
Who seeks his childhood's home once more,  
And finds it in a strange disguise  
Of vacant rooms and naked floor,  
With sudden teardrops in his eyes.

An empty nest! It used to bear  
A happy burden, when the breeze  
Of summer rocked it, and a pair  
Of merry tattlers told the trees  
What treasures they had hidden there.



### AN EMPTY NEST

But Fancy, flitting through the gleams  
Of youth's sunshiny atmosphere,  
Has fallen in the past, and seems,  
Like this poor leaflet nestled here,—  
A phantom guest of empty dreams.



## HIS LAST PICTURE

THE SKIES have grown troubled and dreary;  
The clouds gather fold upon fold;  
The hand of the painter is weary  
And the pencil has dropped from its hold:  
The easel still leans in the grasses,  
And the palette beside on the lawn,  
But the rain o'er the sketch as it passes  
Weeps low—for the artist is gone.

The flowers whose fairy-like features  
Smiled up in his own as he wrought  
And the leaves and the ferns were his teachers,  
And the tints of the sun what they taught;  
The low-swinging vines, and the mosses—  
The shadow-filled boughs of the trees,  
And the blossomy spray as it tosses  
The song of the bird to the breeze.



### HIS LAST PICTURE

The silent white laugh of the lily  
He learned ; and the smile of the rose  
Glowed back on his spirit until he  
Had mastered the blush as it glows ;  
And his pencil has touched and caressed them,  
And kissed them, through breaths of perfume,  
To the canvas that yet shall have blessed them  
With years of unwithering bloom.

Then come !—Leave his palette and brushes  
And easel there, just as his hand  
Has left them, ere through the dark hushes  
Of death, to the shadowy land,  
He wended his way, happy-hearted  
As when, in his youth, his rapt eyes  
Swept the pathway of Fame where it started,  
To where it wound into the skies.



## HENRY IRVING

[OCTOBER 13, 1905]

'Tis Art reclaims him! By those gifts of hers  
With which so nobly she endowed his mind,  
He brought back Shakespeare, in quick grief and  
glee—

Tasting the world's salt tears and sweet ap-  
plause,—

For, even as through his master's, so there ran  
Through all his multitudinous characters  
Kinship and love and honor of mankind.  
So all mankind shall grace his memory  
In musing proudly: Great as his genius was,  
Great likewise was the man.



## THE VOICE OF PEACE

INDEPENDENCE BELL :

INDIANAPOLIS, NOVEMBER 17, 1904

THOUGH now forever still  
Your voice of jubilee—  
We hear—we hear, and ever will,  
The Bell of Liberty!  
Clear as the voice to them  
In that far night agone  
Pealed from the heavens o'er Bethlehem,  
The voice of Peace peals on!

Stir all your memories up,  
O Independence Bell,  
And pour from your inverted cup  
The song we love so well!  
As you rang in the dawn  
Of Freedom—toll'd the knell  
Of Tyranny,—ring on—ring on—  
O Independence Bell!



## THE VOICE OF PEACE

Ring numb the wounds of wrong  
Unhealed in brain and breast ;  
With music like a slumber-song  
Lull tearful eyes to rest.—  
Ring! Independence Bell!  
Ring on till worlds to be  
Shall listen to the tale you tell  
Of Love and Liberty!



## SOME IMITATIONS

### I

#### POMONA

*(Madison Cawein)*

OH, the golden afternoon!—

Like a ripened summer day  
That had fallen oversoon

In the weedy orchard-way—  
As an apple, ripe in June.

He had left his fishrod leant

O'er the footlog by the spring—  
Clomb the hill-path's high ascent,  
Whence a voice, down showering,  
Lured him, wondering as he went.



### SOME IMITATIONS

Not the voice of bee nor bird,  
Nay, nor voice of man nor child,  
Nor the creek's shoal-alto heard  
Blent with warblings sweet and wild  
Of the midstream, music-stirred.

'Twas a goddess! As the air  
Swirled to eddyng silence, he  
Glimpsed about him, half aware  
Of some subtle sorcery  
Woven round him everywhere.

Suavest slopes of pleasaunce, sown  
With long lines of fruited trees  
Weighed o'er grasses all unmown  
But by scythings of the breeze  
In prone swaths that flashed and shone

Like silk locks of Faunus sleeked  
This, that way, and contrawise,  
Thro' whose bredes ambrosial leaked  
Oily amber sheens and dyes,  
Starred with petals purple-freaked.



### SOME IMITATIONS

Here the bellflower swayed and swung,  
    Greenly belfried high amid  
Thick leaves in whose covert sung  
    Hermit-thrush, or katydid,  
Or the glowworm nightly clung.

Here the damson, peach and pear ;  
    There the plum, in Tyrian tints,  
Like great grapes in clusters rare ;  
    And the metal-heavy quince  
Like a plummet dangled there.

All etherial, yet all  
    Most material,—a theme  
Of some fabled festival—  
    Save the fair face of his dream  
Smiling o'er the orchard wall.



## SOME IMITATIONS

### II

#### THE PASSING OF A ZEPHYR

(*Sidney Lanier*)

UP from, and out of, and over the opulent woods  
and the plains,  
Lo! I leap nakedly loose, as the nudest of gods  
might choose,  
For to dash me away through the morning dews  
And the rathe Spring rains—  
Pat and pet the little green leaves of the trees and  
the grass,  
Till they seem to linger and cling, as I pass,  
And are touched to delicate contemporaneous  
tears of the rain and the dew,  
That lure mine eyes to weeping likewise, and to  
laughter, too:  
For I am become as the balmiest, stormiest  
zephyr of Spring,  
With manifold beads of the marvelous dew and  
the rain to string  
On the bended strands of the blossoms, blown  
And tossed and tousled and overthrown,



### SOME IMITATIONS

And shifted and whirled, and lifted unfurled  
In the victory of the blossoming  
Of the flags of the flowery world.  
Yea, and behold! and a riotous zephyr, at last,  
I subside; I abate; I pass by; I am past.  
And the small, hoarse bass of the bumble-bee  
Is my requiem-psalm,  
And I fling me down to a listless, loitering, long  
eternity  
Of amiable calm.

### III

EF UNCLE REMUS PLEASE TER 'SCUSEN ME

*(Joel Chandler Harris)*

Dev wunce wuz er time which I gwineter tell you  
'bout it—  
An' it's easy ter believe it sho'ly ez it is ter doubt  
it!—



## SOME IMITATIONS

So des you pick yer "ruthers" whilse I tell how  
ole Br'er Rabbit

Wunce know de time when he git de fightin'  
habit.

Co'se he ain't no bragger, des a-rippin' an'  
a-rarin'

An' a-darin' all de beestus an' a-des a-double-  
darin'

Sich ez Mr. Jonus Lion, er Sir Mr. Twister  
Tagger,

Er Sister Hisstopottomus, er A'nt Ferjinn  
Ja'gger!

Yit, des de same, he layin' low an' know he got de  
muscle

What sho' ter s'prise mos' any size what crowd  
'im fer a tussle.—

But speshully he 'spise de *Dawg*, an' sight 'er one  
des make 'im

Fergit hisse'f an' run 'em down an' grab 'em up  
an' shake 'em!—

An', mo' 'n dat, ef 'twuzn't fer de *Dawg-law* den  
ag'in it,

He'd des a-kilt off ev'y *Dawg* dat's chasin' him  
dis minute!



## SOME IMITATIONS

### IV

#### A RHYME FOR CHRISTMAS

IF *Browning* only were here,  
This yule-ish time o' the year—  
This mule-ish time o' the year,  
Stubbornly still refusing  
To add to the rhymes we've been using  
Since the first Christmas-glee  
(One might say) chantingly  
Rendered by rudest hinds  
Of the pelt-clad shepherding kinds  
Who didn't know Song from b-  
U-double-l's-foot!—pah!—  
(Haply the old Egyptian *ptah*—  
Though I'd hardly wager a baw-  
Bee—or a *bumble*, for that—  
And that's flat!) . . . . .  
But the thing that I want to get at  
Is a rhyme for *Christmas*—  
Nay! nay! nay! nay! not *isthmus*—  
The t- and the h-sounds covertly are  
Gnawing the nice auricular



## SOME IMITATIONS

Senses until one may hear them gnar—  
And the terminal, too, for mas is mus,  
So *that* will not do for us.  
Try for it—sigh for it—cry for it—die for it!  
O *but* if Browning were here to apply for it,  
*He'd* rhyme you *Christmas*—  
*He'd* make a *mist* pass  
Over—something o' ruther—  
Or find you the rhyme's very brother  
In lovers that *kissed fast*  
*To baffle the moon*—as he'd lose the *t*-final  
In fas-t as it blended with *to* (mark the spinal  
Elision—tip-clipt as exquisitely nicely  
And hyper-exactly sliced to precisely  
The extremest technical need): Or he'd *twist*  
*glass,*  
Or he'd have a *kissed lass,*  
Or shake 'neath our noses some great giant *fist-*  
*mass*—  
No matter! If Robert were here, *he* could do it,  
Though it took us till Christmas next year to see  
through it.



## SOME IMITATIONS

### V

#### VAUDEVILLE SKITS

##### I

#### SERENADE AT THE CABIN

OH, my little Sadie Sue, I's a-serenadin' you—  
Fer you's de onliest lady-love o' mine;  
De White Folk's dance done over, I has still a  
chune er two  
Below your winder's mohnin'-glory-vine.  
Your good ole mammy's gyarden is, fer shore, a  
ha'nted place,  
Dis midnight whilse I's cropin' 'mongst de  
bloom;  
Yit de moon dah 'bove de chimbly ain' no fairer  
dan de face  
What's hidin' 'hind de curtain o' your room.

#### *Chorus*

Den wake, my colored blonde with eyes o' blue,  
An' lips ez red ez roses renshed with dew;  
Yo' hair ez fair an' fine  
Ez de skeins o' June sunshine,  
My little, light-complected Sadie Sue!



## SOME IMITATIONS

In de "Gran's" old dinin'-hall, playin' fer de  
White Folk's ball,

I watch deir pick o' ladies ez dey glide,  
An' says I, "My Sadie Sue she 'ud shorely best  
you all

Ef she 'uz here a-waltzin' by my side!"  
Den I laugh all to myse'f-like, ez I swipe de  
twangin' strings

An' shet my eyes in sweetest dreams o' you,—  
Fer yo're my heart's own music dat forever  
beats an' sings—

My soul's own serenade—my Sadie Sue!

### *Chorus*

Den wake, my colored blonde with eyes o' blue,  
An' lips ez red ez roses renshed with dew;  
Yo' hair ez fair and fine  
Ez de skeins of June sunshine,  
My little, light-complected Sadie Sue!



## SOME IMITATIONS

### VI

#### 2

#### CHUCK'S HOODOOS

CHUCK's allus had de Hoodoos bad!—

Do what he kin to lose 'em,

Dey track dat coon, by sun er moon,

Des like dey cain't uxcuse 'im!

An' more he gyaurd 'em off, more hard

Hit 'pear-like dat dey press 'im—

De onliest luck dey 'low ole Chuck

Is dis enough to 'stress 'im!

He taken care—no matter where

He's walkin' 'long de street an'

See any ladder leanin' there,

Er cross-eyed man he's meetin'—

Dat eye o' his ketch wher' dey is,

An', quick as "scat," Chuck's hittin'

De curb outside, an' watch wile-eyed

Fust lef'-han' place to spit in!



### SOME IMITATIONS

He' got toenails o' bats; an' snails  
Shet hot in deir shell-houses  
Wid sealin'-wax; an' little backs  
O' turkles in his trouse's:  
'A moleskin'-pu's'; an' possum's han'—  
Des ever' charm an' wonder—  
'An' barber-chair o' shore hosshair—  
An' hoss-shoe hangin' under!

"An' yit," says Chuck, "I got no luck:—  
De Hoodoos still a-bafflin'  
Dis po' ole saint what knows he ain't—  
'Twix' shootin' craps an' rafflin'!  
No overcoat—ner underwear,—  
Right on de aidge o' winter  
I's up aginst de wust layout  
Dey's ever got me inter!"



## OUR LITTLE GIRL

HER HEART knew naught of sorrow,  
Nor the vaguest taint of sin—  
'Twas an ever-blooming blossom  
Of the purity within :  
And her hands knew only touches  
Of the mother's gentle care,  
And the kisses and caresses  
Through the interludes of prayer.

Her baby-feet had journeyed  
Such a little distance here,  
They could have found no briars  
In the path to interfere ;  
The little cross she carried  
Could not weary her, we know,  
For it lay as lightly on her  
As a shadow on the snow.



### OUR LITTLE GIRL

And yet the way before us—  
O how empty now and drear!—  
How ev'n the dews of roses  
Seem as dripping tears for her!  
And the songbirds all seem crying,  
As the winds cry and the rain,  
All sobbingly,—“We want—we want  
Our little girl again!”



## A GOOD MAN

### I

A GOOD MAN never dies—  
In worthy deed and prayer  
And helpful hands, and honest eyes,  
If smiles or tears be there :  
Who lives for you and me—  
Lives for the world he tries  
To help—he lives eternally.  
A good man never dies.

### II

Who lives to bravely take  
His share of toil and stress,  
And, for his weaker fellows' sake,  
Makes every burden less,—  
He may, at last, seem worn—  
Lie fallen—hands and eyes  
Folded—yet, though we mourn and mourn,  
A good man never dies.



## NICHOLAS OBERTING

*A hero of ancient mold is Nicholas Oberting,  
of Hardentown, Indiana, who, a few days ago, in  
saving three boys from being gored to death by  
his infuriated bull, performed a feat of daring  
comparable only with the valorous deeds of Ro-  
man gladiators. . . . .*

*—Indianapolis Star, February 25, 1906.*

SING! O Voice of Valor, sing!—  
Sing of Nicholas Oberting!  
Giant of the strength of ten,  
Yet the gentlest of all men.

He it was that loved the air,  
And the green fields everywhere—  
Loved the meadow slopes and rills,  
And the cattle on the hills—  
Loved all out-o'-doors, and took  
Off his hat, with reverent look,



NICHOLAS OBERTING

'As the balmy winds of Spring  
Waved the peach-bough, blossoming  
At the orchard edge, where he  
Paused to mark the minstrelsy  
Of the daring first redbreast,  
Whose lilt, at its loveliest,  
Was not lovelier to hear  
Than the laughter, ringing near,  
Of child-voices—Truants,—three  
Little stragglers, he could see,  
Crossing the near pasture-land  
Loiteringly, hand in hand,  
Laughing as they came. . . . Until—  
Sudden ran a sickening chill  
Through the strong man's heart! . . . He heard  
Scarce his own voice, afterward,  
For the maddened, bellowing roar  
Of the monster beast that bore  
Down upon the lads. . . . Out rang  
His quick warning.—Then he sprang  
Forth to meet them, crying, "*Run!*—  
*Straight for me!—Come on!—Well done!*"—  
Praised them—cheered them.—"*Good! Hooray!*  
*Now, Red-top, you throw away*



NICHOLAS OBERTING

*That cap! but don't*"—And breathless hung  
The sentence;—for a root had flung  
The youngster—stunned—prone on the  
ground . . .

Then—midst a trampling, thund'rous sound,  
The bellowing beast, with his big bent head,  
And great horns, white as his eyes were red!—  
Charged for the lad, as he helpless lay . . .  
There was a leap then; and—they say—  
(For but one boy had swooned away)—  
There was the *leap* and the *laugh* of a *Man* . . .  
And the bravest war of the world began:  
Pinned by the horns in the Hercules grip  
Of his master—the slaving jaws adrip,  
The foaming, steaming, sweltering, hot-  
Mouthed monster raged and charged and  
fought,—

But ever the great strong hands were set  
At their horny leverage, bloody-wet;  
And ever steadier pressed the hold,  
And ever the wild eyes wilder rolled  
As the thick neck turned, and the great hulk  
grew  
Like an o'er-fed engine, shuddering through—



NICHOLAS OBERTING

Yet the thick neck turned—and turned—and  
turned—

Till the raw tongue shot from the throat and  
burned

The live air foul; and the beast lurched dead  
Crunchingly.

. . . . . And the youngsters said  
That the big man just lay there and cried—  
He was so sorry and satisfied!



## THE ROSE-LADY

### TO THE ROSES

I DREAM that you are kisses Allah sent  
In forms material, that all the earth  
May taste of you and guess of Heaven's worth,  
Since it can waste such sweetness with content,—  
Seeing you showered o'er the Battlement—  
By Angel-hands plucked ripe from lips of mirth  
And flung in lavish clusters, yet no dearth  
Of rapture for the Anthem! . . . I have bent  
Above you, nestled in some low retreat,  
Pressing your velvet mouths against the dust,  
And, ever nurturing this old conceit,  
Have lifted up your lips in perfect trust  
Against my mouth, nor found them the less  
sweet  
For having kissed the dust beneath my feet.



## OURS

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, DECEMBER 8, 1906

*Read at Banquet in Honor of Henry Watterson  
Upon His Departure for Spain*

HERE where of old was heard  
The ringing, singing word  
That orator and bard  
Alike set free  
To soar, through heights profound,  
Our land's remotest bound,  
Till all is holy ground  
From sea to sea—

Here still, with voice and pen,  
ONE cheers the hopes of men  
And gives us faith again—  
This gifted one  
We hold here as the guest  
Most honored—loved the best—  
Wiseest and worthiest—  
Our Watterson.



## OURS

His spirit is the Seer's—  
For, though he sees and hears  
Through human doubts and fears,  
His heart is one  
With Earth's and the Divine—  
With his home-hearts—and mine—  
And the child's heart is thine,  
Our Watterson!

Give us to touch and praise  
His worth in subtlest ways,—  
Lest even our fondest gaze  
He fain would shun—  
Laugh, though a mist appears—  
The glad wine salt with tears—  
Laugh, as we drain it—"Here's  
Our Watterson!"



# AMERICA

SEPTEMBER 14, 1901

*O Thou, America—Messiah of Nations!*

## I

IN THE NEED that bows us thus,

America!

Shape a mighty song for us—

America!

Song to whelm a hundred years'

Roar of wars and rain of tears

'Neath a world's triumphant cheers:

America! America!

## II

Lift the trumpet to thy mouth,

America!

East and West and North and South—

America!

Call us round the dazzling shrine

Of the starry old ensign—

New-baptized in blood of thine,

America! America!



## AMERICA

### III

Dying eyes through pitying mists,  
America!  
See the Assassin's shackled wrists,  
America!  
Patient eyes that turn their sight  
From all blackening crime and blight  
Still toward Heaven's holy light—  
America! America!

### IV

High o'erlooking sea and land,  
America!  
Trustfully with outheld hand,  
America!  
Thou dost welcome all in quest  
Of thy freedom, peace and rest—  
Every exile is thy guest,  
America! America!



## AMERICA

### V

Thine a universal love,  
America!  
Thine the cross and crown thereof,  
America!  
Aid us, then, to sing thy worth:  
God hath builded, from thy birth,  
The first nation of the earth—  
America! America!



## A HOOSIER CALENDAR

### JANUARY

BLEAK JANUARY! Cold as fate,  
And ever colder—ever keener—  
Our very hair cut while we wait  
By winds that clip it ever cleaner:  
Cold as a miser's buried gold,  
Or nether-deeps of old tradition—  
*Jeems January!* you're a cold  
Proposition!

### FEBRUARY

You, February,—seem to be  
Old January's understudy,  
But play the part too vaudeville-y,—  
With wind too moist and snow too muddy—  
You overfreeze and overthaw—  
Your "Hos'ler Jo"-like recitation  
But hints that you're, at best, a raw  
Imitation.



## A HOOSIER CALENDAR

### MARCH

And, March, you've got no friends to spare—  
Warm friends, I mean—unless coal-dealers,  
Or gas-well owners, pipin' where  
The piper's paid—above all spielers;  
You are a month, too, of complex  
Perversities beyond solution—  
A sorto' "loveliest of your sex"  
Institution!

### APRIL

But, April, when you kindo' come  
A-sa'nterin' down along our roadway,  
The bars is down, and we're at home,  
And you're as welcome as a show-day!  
First thing we know, the sunshine falls  
Spring-like, and drenches all Creation  
With that-ere ba'm the poets calls  
"Inspiration."



## A HOOSIER CALENDAR

### MAY

And May!—It's warmin' jest to see  
The crick thawed clear ag'in and dancin'—  
'Pear-like it's tickled 'most as *me*  
A-prancin' 'crosst it with my pants on!  
And then to hear the bluebird whet  
His old song up and lance it through you,  
Clean through the boy's heart beatin' yet—  
Hallylooya!

### JUNE

June—'Ll, I jest git *doped* on June!—  
The trees and grass all at their greenest—  
The round earth swung 'twixt sun and moon,  
Jest at its—so to say—serenest:—  
In country,—stars and whipperwills;  
In town,—all night the boys invadin'  
Leadin' citizens' winder-sills,  
Sair-a-nadin'.



A HOOSIER CALENDAR

JULY

Fish still a-bitin'—*some*; but 'most  
Too hot fer anything but layin'  
Jest do-less like, and watchin' clo'st  
The treetops and the squirrels playin'—  
Their tail-tips switched 'bove knot and limb,  
But keepin' most in sequestration—  
Leavin' a big part to the im-  
Magination.

AUGUST

Now when it's August—I can tell  
It by a hunderd signs and over;—  
They is a mixed ripe-apple-smell  
And mashed-down grass and musty clover;  
Bees is as lazy 'most as me—  
Bee-bird eats 'em—gap's his wings out  
So lazy 'at I don't think he  
Spits their stings out!



## A HOOSIER CALENDAR

### SEPTEMBER

September, you appeal to all,

Both young and old, lordly and lowly;  
You stuff the hay-mow, trough and stall,  
Till horse and cow's as roly-poly  
As pigs is, slopped on buttermilk  
And brand, shipstuff and 'tater-peelin's—  
And folks, too, feelin' fine as silk  
With all their feelin's!

### OCTOBER

If I'd be'n asked for my advice,  
And thought the thing out, ca'm and sober —  
Sizin' the months all once or twice,—  
I'd la'nch'd the year out with *October*. . . .  
All Nature then jest veiled and dressed  
In weddin' gyarments, ornamented  
With ripe-fruit-gems—and kissin' jest  
New-invented!



## A HOOSIER CALENDAR

### NOVEMBER

I'm 'feared November's hopes is few  
And far between!—Cold as a Monday-  
Washday, er a lodge-man who  
You' got to pallbear for on Sunday;  
Colder and scolder every day—  
The fixed official time for sighin',—  
A sinkin' state you jest can't stay  
In, or *die* in!

### DECEMBER

December—why, of course we grin  
And bear it—shiverin' every minute,  
Yet warm from time the month rolls in  
Till it skites out with Christmas in it;  
And so, for all its coldest truths  
' And chill, goose-pimpled imperfections,  
It wads our lank old socks with Youth's  
Recollections.



## AN AUTUMNAL TONIC

WHAT mystery is it? The morning as rare  
As the Indian Summer may bring!  
A tang in the frost and a spice in the air  
That no city poet can sing!  
The crimson and amber and gold of the leaves,  
As they loosen and flutter and fall  
In the path of the park, as it rustlingly weaves  
Its way through the maples and under the eaves  
Of the sparrows that chatter and call.

What hint of delight is it tingles me through?—  
What vague, indefinable joy?  
What yearning for something divine that I knew  
When a wayward and wood-roving boy?  
Ah-ha! and O-ho! but I have it, I say—  
Oh, the mystery brightens at last,—  
'Tis the longing and zest of the far, far away,  
For a bountiful, old-fashioned dinner to-day,  
With the hale harvest-hands of the past.



## A HUMBLE SINGER

A MODEST singer, with meek soul and heart,  
Sat, yearning that his art  
Might but inspire and suffer him to sing  
Even the simplest thing.

And as he sang thus humbly, came a Voice:—  
“All mankind shall rejoice,  
Hearing thy pure and simple melody  
Sing on immortally.”



## THE LITTLE WOMAN

MY LITTLE WOMAN, of you I sing  
With a fervor all divine,—  
For I know the clasp of the hands that cling  
So closely here in mine.

Though the rosy palms I used to press  
Are faded and worn with care,  
And tremulous is the old caress  
That nestles in my hair,—

Your heart to me is a changeless page;  
I have read it bit by bit,  
From the dawn of love to the dusk of age,—  
And the tale is Holy Writ.

Fold your eyes,—for the twilight bends  
As a mother o'er her child—  
Even as when, in the long-lost Then,  
You bent o'er ours and smiled. . . .



## THE LITTLE WOMAN

(Nay, but I spoke all unaware!  
See! I am kneeling, too,  
And with mine, dear, is the rose's prayer,  
With a blur of tears and dew.)

But O little woman, I often grieve,  
As I think of the vanished years  
And trace the course of the cares that leave  
Your features dim with tears:

I often grieve, for the frowns I wore  
When the world seemed all untrue,—  
When my hard, proud heart was sick and sore  
And would not come to you!

I often grieve, as I hold your hand—  
As I hold your hand to-night,—  
That it takes so long to understand  
The lesson of love aright!

But sing the song that I taught you once,  
Dear little woman, as *then*—  
Away far back in the golden months;—  
Sing me the song again!



## THE LITTLE WOMAN

For, as under the stars we loved of yore  
When the nights of love were long,  
Your poor, pale lips grow glad once more  
And I kiss them into song :—

*My little woman's hands are fair  
As even the moonflowers be  
When fairies creep in their depths and sleep  
Till the sun leaps out o' the sea.*

*And O her eyes, they are spheres of light—  
So brighter than stars are they,  
The brightest day is the darkest night  
When my little woman's away.*

*For my little woman has ever a tear  
And a sigh when I am sad;  
And I have a thousand smiles for her  
When my little woman is glad.*

*But my little woman is strong and brave,  
For all of her tears and sighs,  
Her stanch little heart knows how to behave  
Whenever the storms arise.*



## THE LITTLE WOMAN

My little woman, of you I sing  
With a fervor all divine,—  
For I know the clasp of the hands that cling  
So closely here in mine.



## A SPRING SONG AND A LATER

SHE sang a song of May for me,  
Wherein once more I heard  
The mirth of my glad infancy—  
The orchard's earliest bird—  
The joyous breeze among the trees  
New-clad in leaf and bloom,  
And there the happy honey-bees  
In dewy gleam and gloom.

So purely, sweetly on the sense  
Of heart and spirit fell  
Her song of Spring, its influence—  
Still irresistible,—  
Commands me here—with eyes ablur—  
To mate her bright refrain,  
Though I but shed a rhyme for her  
As dim as Autumn rain.



## THE CHILDREN OF THE CHILDLESS

THE Children of the Childless!—Yours—and  
mine.—

Yea, though we sit here in the pitying gaze  
Of fathers and mothers whose fond fingers twine  
Their children's locks of living gold, and praise  
With warm, caressing palms, the head of brown,  
Or crown  
Of opulent auburn, with its amber floss  
In all its splendor loosed and jostled down .  
Across  
The mother-lap at prayer.—Yea, even when  
These sweet petitioners are kissed, and then  
Are kissed and kissed again—  
The pursed mouths lifted with the worldlier  
prayer  
That bed and oblivion spare  
Them yet a little while  
Beside their envied elders by the glow  
Of the glad firelight ; or wresting, as they go,



## THE CHILDREN OF THE CHILDLESS

Some promise for the morrow, to beguile  
Their long exile  
Within the wild waste lands of dream and sleep.  
Nay, nay, not even these most stably real  
Of children are more loved than our ideal—  
More tangible to the soul's touch and sight  
Than *these*—*our* children by Divine birth-  
right. . . .  
These—these of ours, who soothe us, when we  
weep,  
With tenderest ministries,  
Or, flashing into smiling ecstasies,  
Come dashing through our tears—aye, laughing  
leap  
Into our empty arms, in Fate's despite,  
'And nestle to our hearts. O Heaven's delight!—  
The children of the childless—even *these*!



## LINCOLN—THE BOY

O SIMPLE as the rhymes that tell  
The simplest tales of youth,  
Or simple as a miracle  
Beside the simplest truth—  
So simple seems the view we share  
With our Immortals, sheer  
From Glory looking down to where  
They were as children here.

Or thus we know, nor doubt it not,  
The boy he must have been  
Whose budding heart bloomed with  
the thought  
All men are kith and kin—  
With love-light in his eyes and shade  
Of prescient tears :—Because  
Only of such a boy were made  
The loving man he was.



## WHAT TITLE?

WHAT TITLE best befits the man  
We hold our first American?  
Or Statesman ; Soldier ; Hero ; Chief,  
Whose Country is his first belief ;  
Or sanest, safest Leader ; or  
True Patriot ; or Orator,  
Heard still at Inspiration's height,  
Because he speaks for truth and right :  
Or shall his people be content  
With Our Republic's President,  
Or trust his ringing worth to live  
In song as Chief Executive?  
Nay—his the simplest name—though set  
Upon him like a coronet,—  
God names our first American  
The highest, noblest name—The MAN.



## GENERAL LEW WALLACE

FEBRUARY 15, 1905

NAY, Death, thou mightiest of all

Dread conquerors—thou dreadest chief,—  
Thy heavy hand can here but fall

Light as the Autumn leaf:  
As vainly, too, its weight is laid

Upon the warrior's knightly sword;—  
Still through the charge and cannonade  
It flashes for the Lord.

In forum—as in battlefield—

His voice rang for the truth—the right—  
Keyed with the shibboleth that pealed

His Soul forth to the fight:  
The inspiration of his pen  
Glowed as a star, and lit anew  
The faces and the hearts of men  
Watching, the long night through.



GENERAL LEW WALLACE

A destiny ordained—divine  
It seemed to hosts of those who saw  
His rise since youth and marked the line  
Of his ascent with awe :—  
From the now-storied little town  
That gave him birth and worth, behold,  
Unto this day of his renown,  
His sword and word of gold.

Serving the Land he loved so well—  
Hailed midsea or in foreign port,  
Or in strange-bannered citadel  
Or Oriental Court,—  
He—honored for his Nation's sake,  
And loved and honored for his own—  
Hath seen his Flag in glory shake  
Above the Pagan Throne.



## THE HOOSIER IN EXILE

THE Hoosier in Exile—a toast  
That by its very sound  
Moves us, at first, to tears almost,  
And sympathy profound;  
But musing for a little space,  
We lift the glass and smile,  
And poise it with a royal grace—  
The Hoosier in Exile!

The Hoosier in Exile, forsooth !  
For though his steps may roam  
The earth's remotest bounds, in truth  
His heart is ever home !  
O loyal still to every tie  
Of native fields and streams,  
His boyhood friends, and paths whereby  
He finds them in his dreams !

Though he may fare the thronging maze  
Of alien city streets,  
His thoughts are set in grassy ways  
And woodlands' cool retreats ;



## THE HOOSIER IN EXILE

Forever, clear and sweet above  
The traffic's roar and din,  
In breezy groves he hears the dove,  
And is at peace within.

When newer friends and generous hands  
Advance him; he returns  
Due gratefulness, yet, pausing, stands  
As one who strangely yearns  
To pay still further thanks, but sighs  
To think he knows not where,  
Till—like as life—with misty eyes  
He sees his mother there.

The Hoosier in Exile? Ah, well,  
Accept the phrase, but know  
The Hoosier heart must ever dwell  
Where orchard blossoms grow  
The whitest, apples reddest, and,  
In cornlands, mile on mile,  
The old homesteads forever stand—  
"The Hoosier in Exile!"



## CHRISTINE

*"Two strangers meeting at a festival;  
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall."  
—Tennyson.*

MOST quaintly touching, in her German tongue—  
Haply, had he but mastered that as well  
As she his English, this were not to tell:—  
Touring through her dear Fatherland, the young  
American first found her, as she sung  
*"Du bist mir nah und doch so fern,"* while fell  
Their eyes together, and the miracle  
Of love and doom was wrought. Her father  
    wrung  
The lovers from each other's arms forever—  
Forgive him, all forgiving souls that can!  
She died that selfsame hour—just paused to  
    write  
Her broken heart's confession thus: "I never  
Was oh so loving in a young gentleman  
Than yet I am to you. So ist' Good night."



## YOU MAY NOT REMEMBER

*In the deep grave's charmed chamber,  
Lying tranced in breathless slumber,  
You may haply not remember.*

You may not remember whether  
It was Spring or Summer weather ;  
But *I* know—we two together  
    At the dim end of the day—  
How the fireflies in the twilight  
    Drifted by like flakes of starlight,  
    Till o'er floods of flashing moonlight  
    They were wave-like swept away.

You may not remember any  
Word of mine of all the many  
Poured out for you there, though then a  
    Soul inspiréd spake my love ;—  
But *I* knew—and still review it,  
    All my passion, as with awe it  
    Welled in speech as from a poet  
    Gifted of the gods above,



YOU MAY NOT REMEMBER

Sleeping here, this hour I grieve in,  
You may not remember even  
Any kiss I still believe in,  
Or caress of ecstasy,—  
May not even *dream*—O can't you?—  
That I kneel here—weep here—want you—  
Feign me in your grave, to haunt you,  
Since you come not back to me!

Vain! ah, vain is all my yearning  
As the West's last embers burning  
Into ashes, slowly turning  
Ever to a denser gray!—  
While the fireflies in the twilight  
Drift about like flakes of starlight,  
Till o'er wastes of wannest moonlight,  
They are wave-like swept away.



## THE REST

V. K.—NATURALIST

HE RESTS at last, as on the mother-breast  
The playworn child at evening lies at rest,—  
For he, a buoyant child, in veriest truth,  
Has looked on life with eyes of changeless  
youth:—

Has loved our green old earth here from the hour  
Of his first memory of bud and flower—  
Of morning's grassy lawns and dewy trees  
And orchard-blossoms, singing birds and bees:

When all the world about him was a land  
Elysian, with the mother near at hand:  
With steadfast gaze of wonder and delight  
He marked the miracles of day and night:—  
Beheld the kingly sun, in dazzling reign  
By day; and, with her glittering, glimmering  
train

Of stars, he saw the queenly moon possess  
Her throne in midmost midnight's mightiness.



## THE REST

All living least of things he ever knew  
Of mother Earth's he was a brother to:  
The lone rose by the brook—or, under, where  
The swaying water-lilies anchored there;  
His love dipped even to the glossy things  
That walked the waters and forgot their wings  
In sheer insanity of some delight  
Known but to that ecstatic parasite.

It was enough, thus childishly to sense  
All works—since worthy of Omnipotence—  
As worshipful: Therefor, as any child,  
He knelt in tenderness of tears, or smiled  
His gratefulness, as to a playmate glad  
To share His pleasures with a poorer lad.  
And so he lived: And so he *died?*—Ah, no,  
We'll not believe that till he tells us so.



## A CHRISTMAS GLEE

FEIGNED AS FROM ELIZABETHAN COMEDY

### I

With a hey! and a hi! and a hey-ho glee!

O a Christmas glass for a sweet-lipped lass  
To kiss and pass, in her coquetry—

So rare!

And the lads all flush save the right one there—

So rare—so rare!

With a hey! and a hi! and a ho—oh!

The Christmas holly and the mistletoe!

### II

With a hey! and a hi! and a hey-ho wile!

As he lifts the cup and his wan face up,  
Her eyes touch his with a tender smile—

So rare!

Then his hands grasp out—and her own are  
there—



## A CHRISTMAS GLEE

So rare—so rare!  
With a hey! and a hi! and a ho—oh!  
The Christmas holly and the mistletoe!

### CHORUS

With a hey! and a hi! and a hey-ho-ho!  
The wind, the winter and the drifting snow!  
With a hey! and a hi! and a ho—oh!  
The Christmas holly and the mistletoe!



## WE MUST BELIEVE

*"Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief."*

### I

WE must believe—

Being from birth endowed with love and trust—  
Born unto loving;—and how simply just  
That love—that faith!—even in the blossom-face  
The babe drops dreamward in its resting-place,  
Intuitively conscious of the sure  
Awakening to rapture ever pure  
And sweet and saintly as the mother's own,  
Or the awed father's, as his arms are thrown  
O'er wife and child, to round about them weave

And wind and bind them as one harvest-sheaf  
Of love—to cleave to, and *forever* cleave. . . .

Lord, I believe:

Help Thou mine unbelief.



## WE MUST BELIEVE

### II

WE must believe—

Impelled since infancy to seek some clear  
Fulfilment, still withheld all seekers here;—  
For never have we seen perfection nor  
The glory we are ever seeking for:  
But we *have* seen—all mortal souls as one—  
Have seen its *promise*, in the morning sun—  
Its blest assurance, in the stars of night;—  
The ever-dawning of the dark to light;—  
The tears down-falling from all eyes that grieve—  
The eyes uplifting from all deeps of grief,  
Yearning for what at last we shall receive. . . .

Lord, I believe:

Help Thou mine unbelief.

### III

WE must believe:

For still all unappeased our hunger goes,  
From life's first waking, to its last repose:  
The briefest life of any babe, or man  
Outwearing even the allotted span,



## **WE MUST BELIEVE**

Is each a life unfinished—incomplete :  
For these, then, of th' outworn, or unworn feet  
Denied one toddling step— O there must be  
Some fair, green, flowery pathway endlessly  
Winding through lands Elysian! Lord, receive  
And lead each as Thine Own Child—even the  
Chief  
Of us who didst Immortal life achieve. . . .  
Lord, I believe :  
Help Thou mine unbelief.



## LIFE AT THE LAKE

THE green below and the blue above!—  
The waves caressing the shores they love:  
Sails in haven, and sails afar  
And faint as the waterlilies are  
In inlets haunted of willow wands,  
Listless lovers, and trailing hands  
With spray to gem them and tan to glove.—  
The green below and the blue above.

The blue above and the green below!  
Would that the world were always so!—  
Always summer and warmth and light,  
With mirth and melody day and night!  
Birds in the boughs of the beckoning trees,  
Chirr of locusts and whiff of breeze—  
World-old roses that bud and blow.—  
The blue above and the green below.



## LIFE AT THE LAKE

The green below and the blue above!  
Heigh! young hearts and the hopes thereof!—  
Kate in the hammock, and Tom sprawled on  
The sward—like a lover's picture, drawn  
By the lucky dog himself, with Kate  
To moon o'er his shoulder and meditate  
On a fat old purse or a lank young love.—  
The green below and the blue above.

The blue above and the green below!  
Shadow and sunshine to and fro.—  
Season for dreams—whate'er befall  
Hero, heroine, hearts and all!  
Wave or wildwood—the blithe bird sings,  
'And the leaf-hid locust whets his wings—  
Just as a thousand years ago—  
The blue above and the green below.



## WE MUST GET HOME

WE MUST get home! How could we stray like  
this?—

So far from home, we know not where it is,—  
Only in some fair, apple-blossomy place  
Of children's faces—and the mother's face—  
We dimly dream it, till the vision clears  
Even in the eyes of fancy, glad with tears.

We must get home! With heart and soul we  
yearn  
To find the long-lost pathway, and return! . . .  
The child's shout lifted from the questing band  
Of old folk, faring weary, hand in hand,  
But faces brightening, as if clouds at last  
Were showering sunshine on us as they passed.

We must get home—home to the simple things,—  
The morning-glories twirling up the strings  
And bugling color, as they blared in blue—  
And-white o'er garden-gates we scampered  
through;  
The long grape-arbor, with its under-shade  
Blue as the green-and-purple overlaid.



## WE MUST GET HOME

The rows of sweetcorn and the China beans  
Beyond the lettuce-beds where, towering, leans  
The giant sunflower in barbaric pride  
Guarding the barn-door and the lane outside;  
The honeysuckles, midst the hollyhocks,  
That clamber almost to the martin-box.

We must get home! There only may we find  
The little playmates that we left behind,—  
Some racing down the road; some by the brook;  
Some droning at their desks, with wistful look  
Across the fields and orchards—further still  
Where laughs and weeps the old wheel at the  
    mill.

We must get home! The willow-whistle's call  
Trills crisp and liquid as the waterfall—  
Mocking the trillers in the cherry-trees  
And making discord of such rhymes as these,  
That know nor lilt nor cadence but the birds  
First warbled—then all poets afterwards.

We must get home again—we must—we must!—  
(Our rainy faces pelted to the dust)



WE MUST GET HOME

Creep back from the vain quest through endless  
strife

To find not anywhere in all of life

A happier happiness than blest us then. . . .

We must get home—we must get Home again!







**DIALECT, CHILDISH, AND LIGHTER  
LINES**







## THE HIRED MAN'S DOG-STORY

*"Twa dogs that were na thrang at hame  
Forgather'd once upon a time."*

—Burns.

Dogs, I contend, is jes' about  
Nigh human—git 'em studied out.  
I hold, like us, they've got their own  
Reasonin' powers 'at's theirs alone—  
Same as their tricks and habits too,  
Provin', by lots o' things they do,  
That instinct's not the only thing  
That dogs is governed by, i jing!—  
And I'll say further, on that line,  
And prove it, that they's dogs a-plenty,  
Will show intelligence as fine  
As ary ten men out o' twenty!

Jevver investigate the way  
Sheep-killin' dogs goes at it—hey?  
Well, you dig up the facts and you  
Will find, first thing, they's always *two*  
Dogs goes together on that spree



## THE HIRED MAN'S DOG-STORY

O' blood and puore dog-deviltry !  
And, then, they always go at night—  
Mind ye, it's never in daylight,  
When folks is up and wide awake,—  
No self-respectin' dogs 'll make  
Mistakes o' judgment on that score,—  
And I've knowed fifty head or more  
O' slaughtered sheep found in the lot,  
Next morning the old farmer got  
His folks up and went out to feed,—  
And every livin' soul agreed  
That all night long they never heerd  
The bark o' dog ner bleat o' skeerd  
And racin', tromplin' flock o' sheep  
A-skallyhootin' roun' the pastur',  
To rouse 'em from their peaceful sleep  
To that heart-renderin' disaster !

Well, now, they's actchul evidence  
In all these facts set forth ; and hence  
When, by like facts, it has been foun'  
That these two dogs—colloguin' roun'  
*'At night* as thick as thieves—*by day*  
Don't go together anyway,



## THE HIRED MAN'S DOG-STORY

And, 'pearantly, hain't never met  
Each other; and the facts is set  
On record funder, that these smart  
Old pards in crime lives miles apart—  
Which is a trick o' theirs, to throw  
Off all suspicion, don't you know!—  
One's a *town*-dog—belongin' to  
Some good man, maybe—or to you!—  
And one's a *country*-dog, or "*jay*,"  
As you nickname us thataway.  
Well, now!—these is the facts I' got  
(And, mind ye, these *is* facts—not *guesses*)  
To argy on, concernin' what  
Fine reasonin' powers dogs p'sesses.

My idy is,—the dog lives in  
The *town*, we'll say, runs up ag'in  
The *country*-dog, some Saturday,  
Under a' old farm-wagon, say,  
Down at the Courthouse hitchin'-rack.—  
Both lifts the bristles on their back  
And show their teeth and growl as though  
They meant it pleasant-like and low,  
In case the fight hangs fire. And they



## THE HIRED MAN'S DOG-STORY

Both wag then in a friendly way,  
The town-dog sayin':— "Seems to me,  
Last Democratic jubilee,  
I seen you here in town somewhere?"  
The country-dog says:— "Right you air!—  
And right here's where you seen me, too,  
Under this wagon, watchin' *you*!"  
"Yes," says the town-dog,— "and I thought  
We'd *both* bear watchin', like as not."  
And as he yawns and looks away,  
The country-dog says, "What's your lay?"  
The town-dog whets his feet a spell  
And yawns ag'in, and then says,— "Well,  
Before I answer that—Ain't you  
A Mill Crick dog, a mile or two  
From old Chape Clayton's stock-farm—say?"  
"Who *told* you?" says the jay-dog—"hey?"  
And looks up, real su'prised. "*I guessed*,"  
The town-dog says— "*You* tell the rest,—  
How's old Chape's mutton, anyhow?—  
How many of 'em's ready now—  
How many's ripe enough for use,  
And how's the hot, red, rosy juice?"  
"Mm!" says the country-dog, "I think



## THE HIRED MAN'S DOG-STORY

I sorto' see a little blink  
O' what you mean." And then he stops  
And turns and looks up street and lops  
His old wet tongue out, and says he,  
Lickin' his lips, all slobbery,  
"Ad-drat my melts! you're jes' my man!—  
I'll trust you, 'cause I know I can!"  
And then he says, "I'll tell you jes'  
How things is, and Chape's carelessness  
About his sheep,—fer instance, say,  
To-morry Chapes 'll all be 'way  
To Sund'y-meetin'—and ag'in  
At night." "At night? That lets us in!—  
'Better the day'"—the town-dog says—  
" 'Better the deed.' We'll pray; Lord, yes!—  
May the outpourin' grace be shed  
Abroad, and all hearts comforted  
Accordin' to their lights!" says he,  
"And that, of course, means you and me."  
And then they both snarled, low and quiet—  
Swore where they'd meet. And both stood by it!

Jes' half-past eight on Sund'y night,  
Them two dogs meets,—the *town*-dog, light



### THE HIRED MAN'S DOG-STORY

O' foot, though five mile' he had spanned  
O' field, beech-wood and bottom-land.  
But, as books says,—we draw a veil  
Over this chapter of the tale! . . .  
Yit when them two infernal, mean,  
Low, orn'ry whelps has left the scene  
O' carnage—chased and putt to death  
The last pore sheep,—they've yit got breath  
Enough to laugh and joke about  
The fun they've had, while they sneak out  
The woods-way for the old crick where  
They both plunge in and wash their hair  
And rench their bloody mouths, and grin,  
As each one skulks off home ag'in—  
Jes' innardly too proud and glad  
To keep theirselves from kindo' struttin',  
Thinkin' about the fun they'd had—  
When their blame wizzens needed cuttin'!

Dogs is deliber't.—They can bide  
Their time till s'picions all has died.  
The country-dog don't 'pear to care  
Fer town no more,—he's off somewhere  
When the folks whistles, as they head



## THE HIRED MAN'S DOG-STORY

The team t'ords town. As I jes' said,—  
Dogs is deliber't, don't forgit!  
So this-here dog he's got the grit  
To jes' deprive hisse'f o' town  
For 'bout three weeks. But time rolls roun'! . . . .  
Same as they *first* met:—Saturday—  
Same Courthouse—hitchrack—and same way  
The team wuz hitched—same wagon where  
The same *jay*-dog growls under there  
When same *town*-dog comes loafin' by,  
With the most innocentest eye  
And ginerl meek and lowly style,  
As though he'd never cracked a smile  
In all his mortal days!—And both  
Them dogs is strangers, you'd take oath!—  
Both keeps a-lookin' sharp, to see  
If folks is watchin'—jes' the way  
They acted that first Saturday  
They talked so confidentchully.  
“Well”—says the town-dog, in a low  
And careless tone—“Well, whatch you know?”  
“‘*Know*’?” says the country-dog—“Lots more  
Than some smart people knows—that's shore!”  
And then, in his dog-language, he



## THE HIRED MAN'S DOG-STORY

Explains how slick he had to be  
When some suspicious folks come roun'  
A-tryin' to track and run him down—  
Like *he'd* had anything to do  
With killin' over fifty head  
O' sheep! "Jes' think!—and *me*"—he said,  
"And me as innocent as *you*,  
That very hour, five mile' away  
In this town, like you air to-day!"  
"Ah!" says the town-dog, "there's the beauty  
O' bein' *prepared* for what may be,  
And *washin'* when you've done your duty!—  
No stain o' blood on you or me  
Nor wool in *our* teeth!—*Then*," says he,  
"When wicked men has wronged us so,  
We ort to learn to be forgivin'—  
Half the world, of course, don't know  
How the other gits its livin'!"



## PERVENSITY.

You have more'n likely noticed,  
When you *didn't* when you *could*,  
That jes the thing you *didn't* do  
Was jes the thing you *should*.



## HER POET-BROTHER

OH ! what ef little childerns all  
Wüz big as parunts is !  
Nen I'd join pa's Masonic Hall  
An' wear gold things like his !  
An' you'd "receive," like ma, an' be  
My "hostuss"—An', gee-whizz !  
We'd *alluz* have ice cream, ef we  
Wuz big as parunts is !

Wiv all the money mens is got—  
We'd buy a *Store* wiv that,—  
Ist candy, pies an' cakes, an' not  
No *drygoods*—'cept a hat-  
An'-plume fer *you*—an' "plug" fer me,  
An' clothes like *ma's* an' *his*,  
'At on'y ist fit *us*—ef we  
Wuz big as parunts is !



HER POET-BROTHER

'An'—ef *we* had a little boy  
An' girl like me an' you,—  
Our Store'd keep ever' kind o' toy  
They'd ever want us to!—  
We'd hire "Old Kriss" to 'tend to be  
The boss of all the biz  
'An' ist "*charge*" ever'thing—ef we  
Wuz big as parunts is!



## I' GOT TO FACE MOTHER TO-DAY!

I' got to face Mother to-day, fer a fact!—

I' got to face Mother to-day!

And just how I'll *dare* to, an' how she will act,

Is more than a mortal can say!

But I' got to face her— I' got to! And so

Here's a' old father clean at the end of his row!

And Pink and Wade's gone to the farm fer her  
now—

And I'm keepin' house fer 'em here—

Their purty, new house—and all paid fer!— But  
how

Am *I* goin' to meet her, and clear

Up *my* actchully he'ppin' 'em both to elope?—

( 'Cause Mother wuz set—and wuz no other  
hope! )



I' GOT TO FACE MOTHER TO-DAY!

I don't think it's *Wade* she's so biased ag'in,  
But his *business*,—a railroadin' man  
'At runs a switch-engine, day out and day in,  
And's got to make hay while he can,—  
It's a *dangersome* job, I'll admit,—but see what  
A fine-furnished home 'at he's already got!

And *Pink*—W'y, the girl wuz just pinin' away,—  
So what could her old father do,  
When he found her, hid-like, in a loose load of  
hay,  
But jist to drive on clean into  
The aidge of the city, where—singular thing!—  
Wade switched us away to the Squire, i jing!

Now—a-leavin' me here—they're driv off, with a  
cheer,  
On their weddin'-trip—which is to drive  
Straight home and tell Mother, and toll her back  
here  
And surrender me, dead er alive!  
So I'm waitin' here—not so blame' overly gay  
As I *wuz*,—'cause I' got to face *Mother* to-day!



## GRAMPA'S CHOICE

**FIRST** and best of earthly joys,  
I like little girls and boys:  
Which of all do I like best?  
Why, the one that's happiest.



## A LITTLE LAME BOY'S VIEWS

ON 'Scursion-days—an' Shows—an' Fairs—  
They ain't no bad folks anywheres!—

On streetcars—same as *you*—  
Seems like *somebody* allus sees  
I'm lame, an' takes me on their knees,  
An' holds my crutches, too—  
An' asts me what's my name, an' pays  
My fare theirse'f—On all Big Days!

The mob all *scrowdges* you an' makes  
Enough o' bluffs, fer goodness-sakes!

But none of 'em *ain't* mad—  
They're only *lettin' on*.—*I* know;—  
An' I can tell you *why* it's so:

They're all of 'em too *glad*—  
They're *ever'one*, jes glad as *me*  
To be there, er they *wouldn't* be!



A LITTLE LAME BOY'S VIEWS

The man that sells the tickets snoops  
My "one-er" in, but sorto' stoops  
    An' grins out at me—then  
Looks mean an' business-like an' sucks  
His big mustache at me an' chucks  
    Too much change out again.—  
He's a *smooth citizen*, an' yit  
He don't fool *me* one little bit!

An' then, *inside*—fer all the jam—  
Folks, seems-like, all knows who I am,  
    An' tips me nods an' winks;  
An' even country-folks has made  
Me he'p eat pie an' marmalade,  
    With bottled milk fer "drinks"!—  
Folks *all's* so good to me that I—  
Sometimes—I nearly purt'-near' *cry*.

An' all the *kids*, high-toned er pore,  
Seems better than they wuz before,  
    An' wants to kindo' "stand  
In" with a feller—see him through



A LITTLE LAME BOY'S VIEWS

The *free* lay-out an' *sideshows*, too,  
An' do the bloomin' "grand"!  
On 'Scursion-days—an' Shows an' Fairs—  
They ain't no bad folks anywheres!



## RABBIT

I s'POSE it takes a feller 'at's ben  
Raised in a country-town, like me,  
To '*preciate* rabbits! . . . Eight er ten  
Bellerin' boys and two er three  
Yelpin' dawgs all on the trail  
O' one little pop-eyed cottontail!

'Bout the first good fall o' snow—  
So's you kin track 'em, don't you know,  
Where they've run,—and one by one  
Hop 'em up and chase 'em down  
And prod 'em out of a' old bresh-pile  
Er a holler log they're a-hidin' roun',  
Er' way en-nunder the ricked cord-wood  
Er crosstie-stack by the railroad track  
'Bout a mile  
Out o' sight o' the whole ding town! . . .  
Well! them's times 'at I call good!



## RABBIT

Rabbits!—w'y, as my thoughts goes back  
To them old boyhood days o' mine,  
I kin sic him now and see "Old Jack"  
A-plowin' snow in a rabbit-track  
And a-pitchin' over him, head and heels,  
Like a blame' hat-rack,  
As the rabbit turns fer the timber-line  
Down the County Ditch through the old corn-  
fields. . . .

Yes, and I'll say right here to you,  
Rabbits that boys has *earnt*, like that—  
Skinned and hung fer a night er two  
On the old back-porch where the pump's done  
froze—

Then fried 'bout right, where your brekfust's at,  
With hot brown gravy and shortenin' bread,—  
Rabbits, like *them*—er I ort to a' said,  
I s'pose,  
Rabbits like *those*  
Ain't so p'ticalar pore, I guess,  
Fer *eatin'* purposes!



## A VERY TALL BOY

THE ONE LONE LIMERICK OF UNCLE SIDNEY'S

SOME credulous chroniclers tell us  
Of a very tall youngster named Ellis,  
Whose Pa said, "Ma-ri-er,  
If Bubb grows much higher,  
He'll have to be trained up a trellis."



## THINKIN' BACK

I've ben thinkin' back, of late,  
S'prisin' !—And I'm here to state  
I'm suspicious it's a sign  
Of age, maybe, er decline  
Of my faculties,—and yit  
I'm not feelin' old a bit—  
Any more than sixty-four  
Ain't no young man any more !

Thinkin' back 's a thing 'at grows  
On a feller, I suppose—  
Older 'at he gits, i jack,  
More he keeps a-thinkin' back !  
Old as old men git to be,  
Er as middle-aged as me,



## THINKIN' BACK

Folks 'll find us, eye and mind  
Fixed on what we've left behind—  
Rehabilitatin'-like  
Them old times we used to hike  
Out barefooted fer the crick,  
'Long 'bout Aprile first—to pick  
Out some "warmest" place to go  
In a-swimmin'—*Ooh! my-oh!*  
Wonder now we hadn't died!  
Grate horseradish on my hide  
Jes' *a-thinkin'* how cold then  
That-'ere worter must 'a' ben!

Thinkin' back—W'y, goodness me!  
I kin call their names and see  
Every little tad I played  
With, er fought, er was afraid  
Of, and so made *him* the best  
Friend I had of all the rest!  
Thinkin' back, I even hear  
Them a-callin', high and clear,  
Up the crick-banks, where they seem  
Still hid in there—like a dream—  
And me still a-pantin' on



### THINKIN' BACK

The green pathway they have gone!  
Still they hide, by bend er ford—  
Still they hide—but, thank the Lord,  
(Thinkin' back, as I have said),  
I hear laughin' on ahead!



## NAME US NO NAMES NO MORE

SING, oh, rarest of roundelays!—

Sing the hilarity and delight

Of our childhood's gurgling, giggling days!

When our eyes were as twinkling-keen and  
bright

And our laughs as thick as the stars at night,

And our breasts volcanoes of pent hoo-rays!

When we grouped together in secret mirth

And sniggered at everything on earth—

But specially when strange visitors came

And we learned, for instance, that their name  
was Fishback—or Mothershead—or Philpott—  
or Dalrymple—or Fullenwider—or Applewhite—  
or Hunnicutt—or Tubbs—or Oldshoe!

*"'Oldshoe!'—jeminy-jee!" thinks we—*

*"Hain't that a funny name!—tee-hee-hee!"*

Barefoot racers from everywhere,

We'd pelt in over the back-porch floor

For "the settin'-room," and cluster there

Like a clot of bees round an apple-core,



NAME US NO NAMES NO MORE

And sleeve our noses, and pinafore  
Our smearcase-mouths, and slick our hair,  
And stare and listen, and try to look  
Like "Agnes" does in the old school-book,—  
Till at last we'd catch the visitor's name,—  
Reddinhouse, Lippscomb, or Burlingame,—  
or Winkler—or Smock—or Tutewiler—or  
Daubenspeck—or Throckmorton—or Rubottom  
—or Bixler—

"*Bixler!* jeminy-jee!" *thinks we—*

"*Hain't that a funny name!—tee-hee-hee!*"

. . . . .

Peace!—Let be!—Fall away!—Fetch loose!—

We can't have fun as we had fun *then!*—

Shut up, Memory!—what's the use?—

When the girls and boys of 8 and 10

Are now—well, *matronly*, or *old men*,

And Time has (so to say) "cooked our goose!"

But ah! if we only *could* have back

The long-lost laughs that we now so lack

And so vainly long for,—how—we—*could*

Naturely wake up the neigh-ber-hood,



NAME US NO NAMES NO MORE

over the still heterogenous names ever unrolling from the endless roster of orthographic actualities,—such names—for further instance of good faith—simply such names as Vanderlip—or Funkhouser—or Smoot—or Galbreath—or Frybarger—or Dinwiddie—or Bouslog—or Puterbaugh—or Longnecker—or Hartpence—or Wiggins—or Pangborn—or Bowersox—*“Bowersox”! Gee!—But alas! now we Taste salt tears in our “tee-hee-hee!”*



## THE RAGGEDY MAN ON CHILDREN

CHILDERN—take 'em as they run—  
You kin *bet* on, ev'ry one!—  
Treat 'em right and reco'nize  
Human souls is all one size.

Jevver think?—the world's best men  
Wears the same souls they had when  
They run barefoot—'way back where  
All these little childern air.

Heerd a boy, not long ago,  
Say his parents *sassed* him so,  
He'd *correct* 'em, ef he could,—  
Then be good ef *they'd* be good.



## LIZABUTH-ANN ON BAKIN'-DAY

OUR Hired Girl, when it's bakin'-day  
She's out o' patience allus,  
An' tells us "Hike *outdoors* an' play,  
An' when the cookies 's done," she'll say,  
"Land sake! she'll come an' call us!"  
An' when the little doughbowl 's all  
Ist heapin'-full, she'll come an' call—  
*Nen say*, "She ruther take a switchin'  
Than have a pack o' pesky childern  
Trackin' round the kitchen!"



## "MOTHER"

I'm gittin' old—I know,—

It seems so long ago—

So long sence John was here!

He went so young!—our Jim

'S as old now 'most as him,—

Close on to thirty year'!

I know I'm gittin' old—

I know it by the *cold*,

From time 'at first frost flies.—

Seems like—sence John was here—

Winters is more severe;

And winter I de-spise!

And yet it seems, some days,

John's here, with his odd ways . . .

Comes soon-like from the corn-

Field, callin' "Mother" at

Me—like he called me that

Even 'fore Jim was born!



"MOTHER"

When Jim come—La! how good  
Was all the neighborhood!—  
And Doctor!—when I heerd  
Him joke John, kind o' low,  
'And say: Yes, folks could go—  
Pa needn't be afeard!

When Jim come,—John says-'e—  
A-bendin' over me  
And baby in the bed—  
And jes us three,—says-'e  
"Our little family!"  
And that was all he said . . .

And cried jes like a child!—  
Kissed me again, and smiled,—  
'Cause I was cryin' too.  
And here I am *again*  
A-cryin', same as then—  
Yet happy through and through!

The old home's most in mind  
And joys long left behind . . .  
Jim's little h'istin' crawl



"MOTHER"

Across the floor to where  
John set a-rockin' there . . .  
(I'm *gittin' old*—That's all!)

I'm gittin' old—no doubt—  
(*Healthy* as all git-out!)—  
But,—strangest thing I do,—  
I cry so *easy* now—  
I cry jes anyhow  
The fool-tears wants me to!

But Jim *he* won't be told  
'At "Mother" 's gittin' old! . . .  
Hugged me, he did, and smiled  
This morning, and bragged "*shore*"  
He loved me even more  
Than when he was a child!

That's *his* way; but ef *John*  
Was here now, lookin' on,  
He'd shorely know and see:  
"But, 'Mother'," s'pect he'd say,  
"S'pose you *air* gittin' gray,  
You're younger yet than *me!*"



"MOTHER"

I'm gittin' old,—because  
Our young days, like they was,  
Keeps comin' back—so clear,  
'At little Jim, once more,  
Comes h'istin' 'crost the floor  
Fer John's old rockin'-cheer!

. . . . .

O *beautiful!*—to be  
A-gittin' old, like me! . . .  
*Hey, Jim! Come in now, Jim!*  
*Your supper's ready, dear!*  
(How more, every year,  
He looks and acts like *him!*)



## WHAT LITTLE SAUL GOT, CHRISTMAS

Us PARENTS mostly thinks our own's  
The smartest childern out!  
But Widder Shelton's little Saul  
Beats all I know about!  
He's weakly-like—in p'int o' health,  
But strong in word and deed  
And heart and head, and snap and spunk,  
And allus in the lead!

Comes honest by it, fer his Pa—  
Afore he passed away—  
He was a leader—(Lord, I'd like  
To hear him preach to-day!)  
He led his flock; he led in prayer  
Fer spread o' Peace—and when  
Nothin' but War could spread it, he  
Was first to lead us then!

So little Saul has grit to take  
Things jes' as they occur;  
And Sister Shelton's proud o' him  
As he is proud o' her!



WHAT LITTLE SAUL GOT, CHRISTMAS

And when she "got up"—jes' fer him  
And little playmates all—  
A Chris'mus-tree—they ever'one  
Was there but little Saul.

Pore little chap was sick in bed  
Next room; and Doc was there,  
And said the childern might file past,  
But go right back to where  
The *tree* was, in the settin'-room.  
And Saul jes' laid and smiled—  
Ner couldn't nod, ner wave his hand,  
It hurt so—Bless the child!

'And so they left him there with Doc—  
And warm tear of his Ma's . . .  
Then—suddent-like—high over all  
Their laughture and applause—  
They heerd: "I don't care what you git  
On your old Chris'mus-tree,  
'Cause I'm got somepin' you all hain't—  
I'm got the pleurisy!"



## GOLDIE GOODWIN

My old Uncle Sidney *he* says it's a sign  
All over the Worl', an' ten times out of nine,  
He can tell by the *name* of a child ef the same  
Is a good er bad youngun—ist knows by their  
name!—

So he says, "It's the vurry best sign in the Worl'  
That *Goldie Goodwin* is a good little girl,"—  
An' says, "First she's *gold*—then she's *good*—  
an' behold,  
*Good's 'bout 'leventy-hunnerd times better than  
gold!*"



## SYMPTOMS

I'M NOT a-workin' now!—  
I'm jes' a-layin' round  
A-lettin' *other* people plow.—  
I'm cumberin' the ground! . . .  
I jes' don't *keer*!—I've done my sheer  
O' sweatin'!—Anyhow,  
In this dad-blasted weather here,  
I'm not a-workin' *now*!

The corn and wheat and all  
Is doin' well enough!—  
They' got clean on from now tel Fall  
To show what kind o' stuff  
'At's in their *own* dad-burn backbone;  
So, while the Scriptur's 'low  
Man ort to reap as he have sown—  
I'm not a-workin' now!



## SYMPTOMS

The grass en-nunder these-  
Here ellums 'long "Old Blue,"  
And shadders o' the sugar-trees,  
Beats farmin' quite a few!  
As feller says,—I ruther guess  
I'll make my comp'ny-bow  
And *snooze* a few hours—more er less.—  
I'm not a-workin' now!



## BUB SAYS

THE moon in the sky is a custard-pie,  
An' the clouds is the cream pour'd o'er it,  
An' all o' the glittering stars in the sky  
Is the powdered-sugar for it.

. . . . .

JOHNTS—he's proudest boy in town—  
'Cause his Mommy she cut down  
His Pa's pants fer Johnnts—an' there  
Is 'nuff left fer *'nother* pair!

. . . . .

ONE time, when her Ma was gone,  
Little Elsie she put on  
All her Ma's fine clothes—an' black  
Grow-grain-silk, an' sealskin-sack;  
Nen while she wuz flouncin' out  
In the hall an' round about,



BUB SAYS

Some one knocked, an' Elsie she  
Clean forgot an' run to see  
Who's there at the door—an' saw  
Mighty quick it wuz her Ma.  
But ef she ain't saw at all,  
She'd a-knowed her parasol!

. . . . .

GRAN'PAS an' Gran'mas is funniest folks!—  
Don't be jolly, ner tell no jokes,  
Tell o' the weather an' frost an' snow  
O' that cold New Year's o' long-ago;  
An' then they sigh at each other an' cough  
An' talk about suddently droppin' off.



## THE POOR STUDENT.

WITH SONG elate we celebrate  
The struggling Student wight,  
Who seeketh still to pack his pate  
With treasures erudite;  
Who keepeth guard and watch and ward  
O'er every hour of day,  
Nor less to slight the hours of night,  
He watchful is alway.

Though poor in pence, a wealth of sense  
He storeth in excess—  
With poverty in opulence,  
His needs wax never less:  
His goods are few,—a shelf or two  
Of classics, and a chair—  
A banjo—with a bird's-eye view  
Of back-lots everywhere.

In midnight gloom, shut in his room,  
His vigils he protracts,  
E'en to the morning's hectic bloom,  
Accumulating facts:



### THE POOR STUDENT

And yet, despite or wrong or right,  
He nurtureth a ban,—  
He hath the stanchless appetite  
Of any hired man.

On Jason's fleece and storied Greece  
He feeds his hungry mind ;  
Then stuffs himself like a valise  
With "eats" of any kind :  
With kings he feigns he feasts, and drains  
The wines of ages gone—  
Then husks a herring's cold remains  
And turns the hydrant on.

In Trojan mail he fronts the gale  
Of ancient battle-rout,  
When, 'las the hour ! his pipe must fail,  
And his last "snipe" smush out—  
Nor pauses he, unless it be  
To quote some cryptic scroll  
And poise a sardine pensively  
O'er his immortal soul.



## UNCLE SIDNEY'S RHYMES

LITTLE Rapacity Greed was a glutton :  
He'd eat any meat, from goose-livers to mutton ;  
All fowl, flesh, or sausage with all savors through  
it—

You never saw sausage stuffed as *he* could do it !  
His nice mamma owned, "O he eats as none other  
Than animal kind ;" and his bright little brother  
Sighed, pained to admit a phrase non-eulogistic,  
"Rap eats like a—pardon me—Cannibalistic."

"He eats—like a *boor*," said his sister—"a shame-  
less

Plebeian, in sooth, of an ancestry nameless !"  
"He eats," moaned his father, despairingly placid  
And hopeless,—"*he* eats like—*he* eats like an  
acid !"



## "BLUE-MONDAY" AT THE SHOE SHOP

[IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES]

OH, if we had a rich boss  
Who liked to have us rest,  
With a dime's lift for a benchmate  
Financially distressed,—  
A boss that's been a "jour." himself  
And ain't forgot the pain  
Of restin' one day in the week,  
Then back to work againe!

### *Chorus*

*Ho, it's hard times together,  
We've had 'em, you and I,  
In all kinds of weather,  
Let it be wet or dry;  
But I'm bound to earn my livelihood  
Or lay me down and die!*



"BLUE-MONDAY" AT THE SHOE SHOP

Poverty compels me  
To face the snow and sleet,—  
For poor wife and children  
Must have a crust to eat.—  
The sad wail of hunger  
It would drive me insane,  
If it wasn't for Blue-Monday  
When I git to work againe!

*Chorus*

*Ho, it's hard times together,  
We've had 'em, you and I,  
In all kinds of weather,  
Let it be wet or dry;  
But I'm bound to earn my livelihood  
Or lay me down and die!*

Then it's stoke up the stove, Boss,  
And drive off the damp:  
Cut out me tops, Boss,  
And lend me your clamps;—  
Pass us your tobacky  
Till I give me pipe a start. . . .  
Lor', Boss! how we love ye  
For your warm kynd heart!



“BLUE-MONDAY” AT THE SHOE SHOP

*Chorus*

*Ho, it's hard times together,  
We've had 'em, you and I,  
In all kinds of weather,  
Let it be wet or dry;  
But I'm bound to earn my livelihood  
Or lay me down and die!*



## THE THOUGHTS OF YOUTH

### THE BOYS'

THE lisping maid,  
In shine and shade  
Half elfin and half human,  
We love as such—  
Yet twice as much  
Will she be loved as woman.

### THE GIRLS'

The boy we see,  
Of two or three—  
Or even as a baby,  
We love to kiss  
For what he is,  
Yet more for what he may be.



## IT'S GOT TO BE

"WHEN it's *got* to be,"—like I always say,  
As I notice the years whiz past,  
And know each day is a yesterday,  
When we size it up, at last,—  
Same as I said when my boyhood went  
And I knowed *we* had to quit,—  
"It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!"—  
So I said "Good-by" to *it*.

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!  
So at least I always try  
To kind o' say in a hearty way,—  
"Well, it's *got* to be. Good-by!"

The time just melts like a late, last snow,—  
When it's *got* to be, it melts!  
But I aim to keep a cheerful mind,  
Ef I can't keep nothin' else!  
I knowed, when I come to twenty-one,  
That I'd soon be twenty-two,—  
So I waved one hand at the soft young man,  
And I said, "Good-by to *you*!"



IT'S GOT TO BE

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!  
So at least I always try  
To kind o' say, in a cheerful way,—  
“Well, it's *got* to be.—Good-by!”

They kep' a-goin', the years and years,  
Yet still I smiled and smiled,—  
For I'd said “Good-by” to my single life,  
And I had a wife and child:  
Mother and son and the father—one,—  
Till, last, on her bed of pain,  
She jes' smiled up, like she always done,—  
And I said “Good-by” again.

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!  
So at least I always try  
To kind o' say, in a humble way,—  
“Well, it's *got* to be. Good-by!”

And then my boy—as he grewed to be  
Almost a man in size,—  
Was more than a pride and joy to me,  
With his mother's smilin' eyes.—



### IT'S GOT TO BE

He gimme the slip, when the War broke out,  
And followed me. And I  
Never knowed till the first fight's end . . .  
I found him, and then, . . . "Good-by."

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!  
So at least I always try  
To kind o' say, in a patient way,  
"Well, it's *got* to be. Good-by!"

I have said, "Good-by!—Good-by!—Good-by!"  
With my very best good will,  
All through life from the first,—and I  
Am a cheerful old man still:  
But it's *got* to end, and it's *goin'* to end!  
And this is the thing I'll do,—  
With my last breath I will laugh, O Death,  
And say "Good-by" to *you!* . . .

It's *got* to be! And again I say,—  
When his old scythe circles high,  
I'll laugh—of course, in the kindest way,—  
As I say "Good-by!—Good-by!"



## HOOSIER SPRING-POETRY

WHEN ever'thing's a-goin' like she's got-a-goin'  
now,—

The maple-sap a-drippin', and the buds on ever'  
bough

A-sorto' reachin' up'ards all a-trimblin', ever'  
one,

Like 'bout a million brownie-fists a-shakin' at the  
sun!

The childern wants their shoes off 'fore their  
breakfast, and the Spring

Is here so good-and-plenty that the old hen has to  
sing!—

When things is goin' *thisaway*, w'y, that's the  
sign, you know,

That ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her  
go!

Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her  
go!

Old Winter's up and dusted, with his dratted  
frost and snow—



## HOOSIER SPRING-POETRY

The ice is out the crick ag'in, the freeze is out the  
ground,  
And you'll see faces thawin' too ef you'll jes look  
around!—  
The bluebird's landin' home ag'in, and glad to git  
the chance,  
'Cause here's where he belongs at, that's a settled  
circumstance!  
And him and mister robin now's a-chunin' fer the  
show.  
Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her  
go!

The sun ain't jes' p'tendin' *now!*—The ba'm is in  
the breeze—  
The trees'll soon be green as grass, and grass as  
green as trees;  
The buds is all jes *eechin'*, and the dogwood  
down the run  
, Is bound to bust out laughin' 'fore another week  
is done;  
The bees is wakin', gap'y-like, and fumblin' fer  
their buzz,



## HOOSIER SPRING-POETRY

A-thinkin', ever-wakefuler, of other days that  
wuz,—

When all the land wuz orchard-blooms and  
clover, don't you know. . . .

Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her  
go!











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